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C O N F I D E N T I A L DOHA 000177

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [QA](#)

SUBJECT: MFA STATE MINISTER DESCRIBES UPCOMING ARAB LEAGUE SUMMIT AGENDA

Classified By: Ambassador Joseph E. LeBaron, for reasons 1.4 (b, d).

(C) KEY POINTS

-- Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Al-Mahmoud told Ambassador March 10 that Arab League Foreign Ministers were generally in agreement during their deliberations on establishing the agenda for the March 29-30 Arab League Summit.

-- There was agreement among Foreign Ministers on the need for Palestinian reconciliation, and "even Syria and Lebanon" were collegial, he claimed.

-- Al-Mahmoud reported that only Arab League heads of state have been invited to the Doha Summit (not Iran), but representatives of the United Nations and African Union would attend.

-- Al-Mahmoud said 28 agenda items were scheduled for discussion at the Summit; he listed a dozen of them in the meeting, and that list appears at the end of this message.

End Key Points.

¶1. (C) Ambassador asked Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Ahmed Al-Mahmoud March 10 for an overview of the March 29-30 Arab League Summit agenda and for insights into its preparations.

¶2. (C) Al-Mahmoud was optimistic the Arab League Summit meeting in Doha would go well based on his recent meeting to with Arab League Foreign Ministers to establish the agenda. Al-Mahmoud told Ambassador, "It is important that there be no disputes" among Arab League members in Doha.

¶3. (C) Al-Mahmoud was encouraged that the Foreign Ministers "were not in disagreement" and that "there are no differences of view on the Arab League initiative" with respect to the steps needed to establish peace with Israel. Likewise, said Al-Mahmoud, the Foreign Ministers were agreed that Arab League support for Palestinian reconciliation is essential. According to Al-Mahmoud, "even Syrian and Lebanon got along well," and cooperated on language related to bring former Lebanese PM Hariri's killers to justice.

¶4. (C) Al-Mahmoud assured the Ambassador that Iran's President was not invited to the Summit and would not be present, stating that only Arab League heads of state were invited to the meeting. Al-Mahmoud added that there would be non-member observers, such as the UN and African Union, in attendance, however.

¶5. (C) Looking at the agenda for the Summit agreed to by the Foreign Ministers, Al-Mahmoud listed for Ambassador a dozen agenda items out of the 28 items agreed to by the Foreign Ministers:

-- Palestinian issues
-- Iraq
-- Lebanon
-- return of the Golan Heights to Syria
-- Iran's occupation of various islands in the Gulf
-- Somalia
-- Djibouti's request for help resolving its dispute with Eritrea
-- Situation in the Comoros Islands
-- Sudan
-- Relations with Europe, the Americas, and China
-- Establishing a nuclear-free zone in the Middle East
-- economic and social issues to include development and trade issues

¶6. (C) Asked about the exact timing of the Summit, Al-Mahmoud said the heads of state would arrive the evening of March 29, with the actual Summit taking place March 30.
LeBaron